

In the Claims:

The Applicants request that claims 50 , 53 and 54 be canceled without prejudice.

The Applicants also request that claim 66 be amended to remove the phrase "a mannitol-1-phosphate dehydrogenase gene."

REMARKS

The cancellation of claim 50 addresses the Answer's concerns under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. It was appreciated that there was currently no antecedent basis for the phrase "autonomous replication vector" in any of the pending claims. Applicants choose to avoid raising any new issues for consideration at this juncture.

Claims 53 and 54 were dependent claims directed to particular gene species previously removed from base claim 47.

The subject matter of the element removed from claim 66 is currently being pursued in a related application.

Respectfully submitted,

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